

Christianity and Crisis

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DETROIT

Christian Unity Must Be Maintained

IT is one of the curious facts of the history of Christian expansion that the spirit of rivalry and competition between branches of the Church has led to an extension and diffusion otherwise quite possibly not attainable. This is not to infer that high costs have not had to be paid for this. In the Providence of God the missionary enterprise, despite all of its competitive zeal, has itself produced the ecumenical movement which seeks to restore the lost sense of unity to the world community of Christ. That the movement has arisen is eloquent witness to the fact that missionary statesmanship first became aware of the fact that "the world is too strong for a divided Church," as Bishop Brent, himself long a missionary, put it at Stockholm.

One of the places where it is safe to say that the spirit of rivalry and competition will be self-defeating is in the reconstruction of Christian institutions in Europe as well as in Asia after the war. Reasons for this need hardly be elaborated. For one thing there has been a measure of cooperation between all the branches of the Church—including the Church of Rome—not seen anywhere since the Reformation. From one end of the continent to the other come evidences of this. And already we have testimonies from those inside Europe to their conviction that this unity must not be allowed to disintegrate.

The prevalence of this conviction, even where realism forbids the expectation that Protestant-Roman cooperation will outlast the period of persecution in any very vital or comprehensive form, led the representatives of European Protestantism at Geneva in 1942 to outline plans for a unified approach to reconstruction through the World Council of Churches, now officially the organ of eighty-three non-Roman communions.

The plans for that approach, calling for the creation of a Department of Reconstruction of Christian Institutions, were widely hailed in this country when Dr. Cavert brought them back. Promising signs may be discerned of the intention of American communions to follow at least in part the recommendations therein contained. It can be confidently stated that thanks to the action already taken by the Congregational Christian and the Methodist Churches, and prospective action by at least one other com-

munion, there will be contributed to the staff of the new department in Geneva a group of competent persons whose support will remain denominational although their work will be only partly denominational if not wholly ecumenical.

But that is only part of the plan. Two things were regarded as basic. First there should be a comprehensive general survey of need in which the conditions of all churches should be taken into account. Second there should be a plan for the "registration" at Geneva of all the undertakings for which non-European or Scandinavian churches make themselves responsible. In other words, while no attempt would be made to discourage or control denominational initiative or help for sister communions large or small, it is hoped that a correlation of information, systematically undertaken and carefully supervised, would result—as in the case of aid to orphan missions—in a degree of efficiency not hitherto possible. It would, furthermore, provide a visible symbol of functional unity in full freedom.

While most denominational leadership is disposed to be friendly to this attempt, yet old habits are strong. Plans for denominational deputations and surveys are under discussion as if there were no office in Geneva belonging to all of the churches and no comprehensive plan for representative united surveys.

Here in America the denominations have made a grand beginning and have set up the Church Committee for Overseas Relief and Reconstruction. It is doing good work and its planning is comprehensive. Its principles are those of functional unity in freedom. There is as yet no assurance that the churches which have created CCORR will use it as the *main channel* of their help for churches overseas.

Yet two illustrations from another area of international cooperation abroad ought to give churchmen encouragement to proceed on the lines projected. The first is UNRRA. What a difference it will make if church support for united reconstruction becomes as concrete and definite as governmental support for this projected united relief. Here is another comprehensive mechanism which, while recognizing the autonomy of its parts and the necessity for flexibility, is nevertheless dedicated to the

proposition that the need is to be met with an effort of correlated strength.

The other illustration comes from the military. Not long ago a visitor at Eisenhower's headquarters after learning of the correlation of national military strength under the general's control said admiringly: "What fine teams you have!" He was startled to have the dynamic general bang the table with a strong ejaculation and the explosive comment: "No! *One* team!"

Churches find it easy to criticize the state for the failure to cooperate in times of danger. Churches laud the governments which manage to find their way through to genuine cooperation. But when they

turn their attention to the tasks of the Kingdom they are in danger of being bound by tradition and blinded by self-interest.

The glorious example provided by the story of united relief for orphan missions encourages hope that we are on the threshold of a new day in Christian cooperation.

It has been done! It must be done in this further important area. On that every forward-looking Christian should insist not by writing his senator but by writing his moderator, bishop, superintendent, president or board secretary as the case may be. The time for action is now. *Tomorrow* it may be too late.

H. S. L.

The Soviet Enigma

JOSEPH L. HROMÁDKA

My Thoughts are not Your Thoughts

THE changes in the political structure of the world since June 1941, transcend all our previous anticipations and predictions. If a man had gone to sleep, let me say, in December 1939 and awoke in December 1943 he would hardly recognize his "old" world. Something has happened, and the history of the European and American people has beaten a course almost totally different from what it had been prior to the German attack on the Soviet Union and to the entry of the U. S. A. into the war. In two years the Soviet Union and the U. S. A. have become, militarily and politically, the leading nations of the world.

After the collapse of France in June 1940, Germany became master of the European continent and assumed, for one year, almost unlimited power over the people of Europe. To be sure, the year between June 1940 and June 1941 was the most glorious year in the British history, a year which the human race will always remember with admiration and gratitude to the British people. However, the Germans were the real masters of the continent, and Great Britain had to fight just for her own life and survival, and the Soviet Union, in her endeavor to postpone the unavoidable conflict between herself and Germany, was withdrawing any help and encouragement to the German-occupied countries.

Today, in the beginning of 1944, we find ourselves on trek towards a new political structure of the whole human race. Great Britain may, for generations, continue to be a wise, mature and well-experienced counsellor in the international affairs, but she certainly has ceased to be the first leading power and the most decisive factor in the world politics.

The Soviet Union has proved to be the strongest continental giant and her influence will be organically growing, both politically and morally. And, on the other hand, the U. S. A. has become the greatest naval power, has tasted a real responsibility for the future of the whole humanity and will be unable to withdraw from it no matter how stubbornly the isolationist tendencies may try to reaffirm themselves.

What an astounding difference between the end of World War I and the present situation! In the years of 1918-1921, the Soviet people were undergoing one of the most destructive civil wars. It amounted to a convulsion of a vast continent between Poland and the Pacific, to chaos and anarchy, famine and death. By this very fact the Soviet people were eliminated from the post-war planning and rehabilitation. The deep distrust and fear on the part of the victorious West of the revolutionary leaders and masses of the Soviet area only made this elimination complete. At the same time, the American people renounced their willingness to cooperate in the world reconstruction. Thus the state of European and international anarchy commenced in the very moment the Versailles Treaty was signed. At the present time it is exactly these nations, Soviet and American, that are assuming the political leadership of the world! Nobody who understands a little of the European history and the history of our civilization can fail to shiver at this unprecedented fact of unforeseeable consequences and at the thought that the Soviet and the American leaders might, through a lack of vision, courage and faith, succumb to the old prejudices and ignorance of one another and think in a mood of gloomy fatalism of the una-

voidability of future clash and a war between themselves. It is, I hope, not presumptuous to say that no matter what the other nations may do the coming peace depends largely on a genuine and sincere mutual understanding of the Soviet and American people. If they are prepared to cooperate and if they stick to this determination, no other power will venture to challenge their leadership in peace and rehabilitation.

All this may appear as a sheer platitude we read about every day in any sensible daily paper. And yet, the full implication of this statement can be fully perceived only if we know about the other alternatives which had threatened the world horizon prior to June 1941. You may beforehand dismiss these possibilities as futile speculation in view of what has actually happened. Nevertheless, we must survey all the potential dangers in order to understand the tremendous challenge of the present moment.

The possibility that Nazi Germany would attack, with or without the help of Poland, the Soviet Union, was real in the fateful year of 1938. All events between 1936 and 1939 bring evidence to our assumption that the European reactionary forces were, directly or indirectly, encouraging the Nazi regime to assail the Soviet Union and liquidate the "Red menace" forever. They were even ready to assist Germany in her anti-communistic *Drang nach Osten*. The disintegration within the "democratic" nations all over Europe reached agonizing dimensions, and even the instinct of self-preservation on the part of the conservative and reactionary strata in Europe was increasingly waning. It is, today, almost unbelievable to what extent Hitler had succeeded to conceal his real desires and designs and to attract the sympathy of the European bourgeoisie and the agrarian groups. The moral, intellectual and political collapse of the liberal middle-class society and of the capitalistic lords in Europe appears today so dismal and calamitous that one cannot help longing for the final and definite end of the rotten European liberalism and capitalism. In the days of Munich, the danger of the German attack on Russia, under the benevolent neutrality and non-belligerent sympathy of the European reaction, was imminent. If the Czechoslovak Army, for example, had defied the Munich agreement and withstood the Nazi aggression, the inevitable catastrophe of Czechoslovakia would have resulted in the German-Russian war, the end of which might have been the unchallenged German domination of Central and Eastern Europe, and in a brief span of time of the whole Europe. I, personally, bitterly deplored the surrender of my country and felt heartbroken at the fact that Czechoslovakia had not resisted the German Army. Today, I clearly realize that Europe was, morally and spiritually, not prepared for war, and that—in all

probability—Germany, after the defeat of the Soviet Union, would have become for generations master of Europe and that the Nazistic and fascistic disease would have infected the whole of Latin America. The moral shock after Hitler's destruction of Czechoslovakia and attack on Poland in 1939 opened the eyes of the Western, primarily British, democracy, and the war-lords of Germany lost their gamble.

There existed, however, another possibility: that the militaristic Germany and the Soviet Union come to some kind of agreement and form an almost invincible alliance against the whole structure of the democratic, liberal and Christian world. The danger was at hand in the period around 1936 when a considerable number of Russian generals and revolutionary veterans was ready to conspire against Stalin's regime, and enter an accord with the German Army staff. Thus far, nobody from the outside world has a clue to decipher the mystery of the negotiations between the German Army and the Russian conspirators. The history of the world would have assumed a quite different character had the negotiations ended with success. And, who knows and who can say what would have happened if, after June 1940, Great Britain had broken down and Germany and the Soviet Union, with Italy and Tokyo, stood as the only great military powers in the world? The possibility of a grand coalition for the distribution of the world was not unthinkable.

There is another point worth mentioning. The dynamic expansion of the Nazi movement coincided with the period of spiritual, moral and philosophical decadence of the Western democracy, and of its intelligentsia. The mood of indifference and carelessness, a lack of strong convictions and loyalties, did not promise a vigorous resistance against the danger of what was an unprecedented and universal tyranny. Now, the course of history has created a situation which can be fully understood only from a spiritual watch tower. I am now speaking personally, but am certain to echo the sentiments, anxieties and hopes of many men and women who have been approaching the contemporary events with insight and understanding. The Western democracies and the Soviet Union are called upon jointly to organize the world and to lay down foundations for a lasting peace. This is the best possible alternative, an alternative which, some few years ago, was least foreseen and even less desired—"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."

The Soviet System and Russian Christianity

There is nothing more natural than to ask as to whether a real, genuine cooperation between the European East and the West will be possible. To minimize the gravity of this question would be as perilous as to fatalistically insist on the insurmount-

able gap between the Soviet realm and the democratic world. The differences between the two ways of life and thought are undoubtedly deep.

The Russian revolution, to be sure, was to a certain extent an invasion of the European West into the vast areas of the old Russia. Under the flag of Marxism the Russian people started a drive for technical, industrial, scientific, organizational reconstruction on an astounding scale. They desired to make up what had been neglected under the indolent Tsarist regime. The Russian intelligentsia admired the achievements of Western science, technology and politics, and strove for the "Westernization" of Russia long before the actual revolution.

And yet, the communistic revolution was a genuinely Russian phenomenon. Under the veneer of the Marxian ideology, the Russian soul was boiling and working for self-expression and self-affirmation. One only needs to read the phalanx of true, authentic Russian writers and thinkers in order to understand the real character of the revolutionary movement which actually started way back in the 19th century and culminated in the volcanic explosion of 1917. Not only the rebels against the official Tsarist and ecclesiastical regime, the men like Belinski, Gerzen, Tchernyshevski, Pisarev, Plechanov, Lenin, but also thinkers and writers like Gogol, Khomyakov, Tolstoi, Dostoyevski, Solovyov, and Berdyaev had anticipated, in one way or another, the upheaval of the intelligentsia and masses which came in the end of World War I.

The people of the vast Russian territory think and react far more collectivistically than a Western socialist and communist, let alone a liberal democrat. Even a Russian Christian understands and interprets salvation of his own soul in a much closer association with the whole of the human race, and of creation than a Western Catholic or Protestant. You may have, just as I have, legitimate objections to his longing for the absorption (not punishment!) by the Incarnate Word of the demonic and satanic powers ruling in the world, but you cannot help being deeply impressed by his longing for the universal, collective, restitution of the whole creation, his insistence on the impossibility of being truly happy unless every single individual soul partakes in the universal harmony, joy and triumph. As a matter of fact, the redemption of the created world and of humanity is the starting point and a prerequisite of any Russian thought on soteriology.

Anybody who is a little familiar with the Russian spiritual and intellectual life cannot fail to sense its dynamic compassion for the underdog of human society, for the destitute, wretched, down-trodden men, women and children, its unquenchable passion for a radical remedy, for the triumph of all those living in grief and sorrow, misery and frustration.

Every thoughtful reader of Dostoyevski has cer-

tainly realized the latent tension and contradiction in his literary work between his almost reactionary visions of the Russian Tsar, of national mystical community and of the Eastern orthodoxy, on the one hand, and his criticism of the official beaureacracy, the rotten state of national affairs in Russia and of the average priest, on the other hand. Yes, indeed, his ideas of a true Tsar and of a real national brotherhood and love, sympathy and justice proved to be a more severe attack upon the official Russian system than many other, socialistic or materialistic, indictments of the ruling classes.

What is still more striking, Dostoyevski was in a deep love with the first socialists in Russia, with Belinski and Gerzen, with the apostles, among the intelligentsia, of the new order of brotherhood, harmony and love. He believed that it is exactly the Russian people that are destined to bring to the rest of the world the *new* word, the *final* word of universal repentance, compassion and reconciliation. Dostoyevski felt much closer to the Russian anti-religious, anti-church, anti-bourgeois, anti-capitalistic socialistic radicals than to the Tsarist officialdom, let alone to the Western bourgeois and Catholic civilization. He maintained that the "Westerner" Belinski had been, in spite of all his errors, a "true Russian"—exactly because of his socialistic hostility to the Western capitalism and bourgeoisie; whereas a conservative Russian (for example Duke Gagarin) who had become a Roman Catholic European, yes, a Jesuit, ceased, in Dostoyevski's judgment, to be a Russian, and actually joined the anti-Russian front.

Pointing to this thought of Dostoyevski's, I wish to stress two facts: First, there is no insurmountable gap between the Soviet revolution and the Russian Christian tradition. The Soviet system is by no means a thoroughly alien importation into the old Eastern Orthodox Russia. The Soviet way of life and thought is a synthesis, or at least a combination, of the radical Marxian socialism and of many essential, genuine motifs of the indigenous Christianity in Russia. In many ways, the old Russian spiritual and cultural trends are at the present time re-emerging above the surface of the Soviet life. They might have been crushed by the purely revolutionary and destructive dynamism of the old Bolsheviks. And I venture to say they would have been destroyed if the historical events had brought German Nazism and Soviet Communism to a long, more or less permanent, cooperation. Under the unimaginable suffering of the Soviet people, however, in view of the abysmal losses and sacrifices of the young Soviet generation, the latent spiritual, national and emotional elements of the Russian history have been set free, and *may* become the main constructive force in the days to come. The recent appointment of Sergius as the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church is in my judgment an external symbol of what has

actually been going on in the soul of the Soviet people. In my talks with a leading Soviet correspondent, at present in Great Britain, I learned of an increasing respect on the part of the Soviet man for the plain priests of the Church.

Second, the re-appearance on the stage of the Soviet society of the religious trends must not be mistaken for a de-socialization or de-collectivization of the Soviet policy. Individual freedom in religion, in artistic creativity and in scientific research may and will, in all probability, grow. But the essential socialistic foundation of the Soviet Union will remain unshaken and, in its very nature, unaltered. Unless I am utterly mistaken, the post-war Soviet area may offer us an unexpected spectacle of an intimate co-operation, and of a genuine synthesis, of the Russian Christianity and the collectivistic structure of social life. Even the old Bolsheviks may, sooner or later, realize that a vast country with a vast population cannot be integrated into a stable and healthy nation without constructive motifs of religious convictions, moral discipline and universally valid principles of justice, brotherhood and human freedom. We have no reliable means in order to estimate the real spiritual power of the Soviet Christians, the power of their faith, the strength of their thought and the vigor of their leadership. And yet, it is not a mere speculation if I say that Russian Christianity, after an unprecedented trial and purification, may inaugurate a new era of our history which can be, in the days to come, compared both to the era of Latin Catholic feudalism and to the era of the Protestant liberalism and bourgeoisie.

What can we do in view of this potential development in the area of Eastern Europe? Is it, indeed, not a sheer speculation tainted with a dose of fantastic utopianism? I am not in the position to give evidence to the adequacy of my analysis and "prognostication." The cynical realists may hold the ground and prove to be wiser and more farseeing. The third world war may be in the making. Yes, indeed, all nations and countries are apt and disposed to become agents either of imperialistic expansion and domination or of good will, cooperation and peace. Nobody can make unqualified predictions of what kind of America will emerge when the hostilities have ceased. There exists a potential danger of an imperialistic and nationalistic Soviet Union. The era of revolutionary, relentless dynamism of the old Bolshevik group may be replaced, here, by an era of the nationalistic lust for power and dominion.

However, it is here that I wish to stress the urgent need to be courageous, to face the future with faith and determination, and to defy "the higher wisdom" of cynical fatalism. We may either shape the history, or abdicate and succumb to the mood of a "realism" which amounts to a morbid, helpless, pessimistic despair. The period between the two

wars was a period of moral, spiritual decadence on the part of the Western intelligentsia. What kind of leadership are we going to offer in the coming post-war era? Are we going to continue in the way of "de-bunking," of cynical depreciation of our heritage and legacy? Are we going to abhor any deep conviction and loyalty, or are we determined to meet the challenge of the hour and to do our job?

The present era is a time of great, tremendous risks. But if we understand the meaning of our times and approach our mission with the full load of faith and sacrifice, a real synthesis of what we call the European East and the democratic West may be initiated. Our constructive and self-critical understanding of the Soviet situation may help the Christian focus in the European East to a new dynamism, the small nations to a large measure of self-determination, and the post-war Europe to a long era of stability and peace. Whereas, our distrust and suspicions will inexorably prepare a new catastrophe.

Impressions of Britain

HENRY SLOANE COFFIN

The dominant physical impression of the visitor to Britain in midwinter is that he is in a land of darkness and of discomfort. Of darkness—an impression heightened by the fact that December has the shortest days and that in some places they are thickly foggy. But the black-out, which no one who does not live with and in it can appreciate, is a constant depressing factor. In December it begins about five o'clock and lasts to nine or after the next morning. The streets are almost lightless, and people move about with electric torches which they try to use as little as possible in order not to wear out batteries very hard to replace. Cabs are scarcely to be had in the evening; omnibuses and trams cease to run by ten o'clock; and woe to the luckless traveller who is landed late at night or early in the morning on a railway platform, where he may find no porter and no means of conveyance for himself and his bags to his hotel or other destination.

It is a land of discomfort. The population is not suffering from disease, but the rapid spread of flu is an index of weakened resistance. Food is a persistent problem for every housewife, and in most hotels and restaurants it is unappetizing. Domestic service is almost non-existent, so that many wives and their husbands who have never had to concern themselves with cooking, washing dishes, cleaning rooms, etc., have a burdensome daily routine in addition to their other work. To see a knighted university principal setting a table or drying dishes or carrying up coals, is a novel sight in the British Isles, and a measure of the shortage of labor. Cues are everywhere—in front of green grocers where a few apples or other fruit and vegetables may be had, and lined up at railway wickets from an hour to half an hour before a train departs in the hope of getting a seat. Railway travel is difficult because the rolling-

stock is worn, because many trains are unheated, and some carriages completely unlighted. Railway platforms, too, are unlit, and one is at a loss to know whether one has arrived at the right station. Peering out into the blackness one may easily get out on the wrong side of the train and find oneself on a track instead of on a platform. Consumer goods are very limited and prices are high. With the housing shortage and the cost of furniture a young couple who wish to marry and set up a home face almost insuperable obstacles. A number of the large cities bear tragic traces of the blitz, and every town looks shabby, for there has been little or no painting or repairs, while metal railings, which divide front greens or basements from the street, have been taken, and leave unsightly gaps in stone pillars.

The spiritual impression is that of a tired people doggedly persevering. There is no joy in the war or in the tasks which it has brought. There is hardly even satisfaction at successes among the thoughtful. They loathe what they are having to do to Germany. They think what a five hundred ton load of bombs did to London, and shudder at what a two thousand ton load must have done to Berlin. Of course there are people who indulge in the natural feeling that the Germans are receiving a taste of the bitter cup they ruthlessly pressed on others. But among the thoughtful, and especially among church folk, there is a reluctant submission to the mysterious necessities of human history. If one talks with young officers who "joined up" at the outset of the war, one discovers how "fed up" they are with the routine and strains of the military life, how regretful that the best years of their education are being sacrificed and how they long for the coming of peace. This does not mean any faltering in resolve to carry the war to a decisive conclusion. The British people are determined that Germany shall be rendered incapable of plunging mankind again into this horror of deep darkness.

Britons have the difficult problem of learning to live on in their own land with an enormous influx of foreigners. In big cities one hears a half dozen languages and several different pronunciations of English on the major thoroughfares. Poles, Czechs, Dutch, French, Norwegians, Belgians pass one on the Dean Bridge or along Princes Street in Edinburgh, and now American troops seem everywhere. There are districts in London where one meets almost as many of them as one does Londoners. Oxford Street is facetiously referred to as "Eisenhowerstrasse." They have been cordially welcomed, and their help in the forthcoming attempt to invade the continent on the western front is recognized as indispensable; but their presence has brought a number of serious issues—perhaps the cause of most difficulty being the more plentiful supply of spending money our soldiers possess on account of their superior pay. The army is trying to cope with this by encouraging thrift and urging the men to buy bonds and stamps that they may have something with which to start their post-war careers.

Recently two localities, one in northwest Scotland and one in southwest England, have been completely evacuated of their inhabitants, and are to be used as practice grounds for the invasion. Unquestionably houses, churches and all other buildings will be de-

stroyed. It is a grievous hardship for the simple folk who love their dwellings and whose forbears have lived for generations in these coastal villages.

However, one seldom hears Britons complaining of any of their discomforts or sufferings, but as one enters homes one is aware of sorrows—a boy lost in North Africa, a pilot reported missing, a son or perhaps a whole family taken prisoner in Hong Kong or Singapore. Not all the British Army escaped Dunkerque, or got out of Greece. There have been heavy losses at sea and in the air force. The price in life has not yet been what it was in the last World War; but Britons are under no illusion as to the cost of an invasion of the "fortress of Europe" from the West. They know that the price whatever it be must be paid, but there are few minds without a dark forboding of the toll which the coming spring will show in dead and wounded.

When one meets with leaders who are trying to look ahead, one finds an absence of the precise plans of world-reconstruction so frequently brought forth here. Britons are so close to the situation, have endured and are enduring so much, that they live from day to day. They are keenly aware of the difficulties in bringing order out of chaos and settling Europe on foundations of justice, not to speak of so settling the Near and the Far East. They are profoundly grateful for Russia which they know has saved them from unspeakable losses. They admire her magnificent military achievements and the surprising industrial production of her people. They cherish the hope that Russia may see in the collective security of the United Nations sufficient safeguard against attack on her western frontiers, and will allow her smaller neighbors some measure of independent life, so that they may conserve their distinctive cultures and institutions. But they recognize that should Russia insist on fairly large territorial gains, neither they nor we or any other nation can stop her. They are much comforted by the results of the conference in Moscow and the subsequent meeting of Stalin with Churchill and Roosevelt. Among intelligent people there is discussion on international affairs and on the problems of the British Commonwealth; but one rarely hears the confident solutions propounded here. Britons are too keenly aware of the complexity of the questions, and their own history and habit of thought make them distrustful of short-cuts to desirable ends. They foresee a long road towards goals which they share with us. If the road can be travelled swiftly in some of its stretches, they will be glad; but they know there are many stretches where the going will be hard, and they are a patient people accustomed to accumulate small gains in freedom and justice and friendship, and gains which they have managed to conserve.

When British-American relations are under discussion, their admiration for President Roosevelt at once emerges, and their apprehension that we are under the necessity of holding a presidential election in the midst of the war. The five senators who made their reports last autumn were taken very seriously and produced indignation. In some professional and academic circles there is a feeling that, while our Constitution, with the adaptability given it by the Supreme Court and the shaping of public opinion, has served us hitherto, it is questionable whether its checks and balances may not render it

inadequate to our situation as we attempt the rôle of a great world power. One hears much praise of our production, of the utterances of some of our public men, of such books as Lippmann's *The Foreign Policy of the United States* and Herbert Agar's *A Time for Greatness*; but there is a not unnatural undercurrent of criticism, often due to misunderstanding, and perhaps in part to apprehension lest with our wealth and aggressiveness we become too dominant a factor in the post-war scene. One discovers little of this in the press, but occasionally one is shown a confidential sheet circulated among financial and business men which is highly suspicious of us and imputes sordid and grasping motives, while declaring that we refuse "to tighten our belts" an are likely to make a poor showing in relieving the distresses of a starving and exploited Europe. Such sheets usually distort the facts or adduce misleading data, but their existence is a sign that commercial rivalry may easily embitter our mutual relations. It is understandable that the rapid expansion of our merchant marine should suggest a formidable competitor in sea transportation.

In the post-war epoch the two great Anglo-Saxon powers will undoubtedly struggle with each other for trade in many markets. Such economic conflict readily breeds suspicion and ill-will. Hence the importance of maintaining cultural ties through our universities and similar groups of thoughtful persons, and above all of deepening our spiritual unity through the work of the churches. It is when one moves in academic and church circles that the basic kinship in faith and ideals of the two peoples is most felt. They and we are at bottom one in the things of the spirit—in the love of

liberty, in the longing for righteousness, in confidence in truth.

Beneath surface indications of weariness and of strain one is impressed with the massive qualities of the British soul. Courage, conscientiousness, determination to discover and do that which is right and faith that right must eventually triumph in God's world—these superb virtues abound in the British character. Britons sometimes seem unimaginative, but that is surely a superficial judgment of a nation which has produced and still produces exquisite poetry. But Britons appear to be able to concentrate upon the immediate task, and not let their minds wander too far afield in irrelevant questionings. The visitor among them may wonder about the future of the British Islands in their own Commonwealth and among the nations of mankind. Doubtless that query engages the minds of some of their own far-sighted inhabitants; but most Britons are not torturing themselves with misgivings about the future. They have an urgent present duty, and they intend to discharge it. They believe in the Providence which has led them through the centuries and given them their high place among the people of the earth. That Providence still presides over human history, and will employ Britain for lofty purposes, so long as the nation remains a fit instrument. Britons went trustfully through the crucial months when their land stood alone against the foes of Western civilization. That experience has fortified their faith, deepened their characters and unified the nation. This confidence in Providence, one visitor thinks, is the underlying faith by which contemporary Britons, like their forefathers through many generations, live and bravely carry on.

The World Church: News and Notes

British Churches on the Colonial Problem

In a new pamphlet on *The Christian and World Problems*, issued by the Department of International Friendship of the British Council of Churches, the British churches have the following to say about the colonial problem:

"There is no doubt that the whole subject of the government of backward peoples and of the subjection of one people or nation to another occupies a new place in the public mind and conscience. The fact that much criticism of what is briefly called 'imperialism' is ill-based and ignorant must not blind us to the fact that the criticism is wide-spread and that it has its roots in moral considerations. . . .

"That every nation has an inherent right of self-government is a somewhat abstract proposition, which could be debated at length. One might ask whether the right of self-government is inherent in the individual or whether it is conditioned by life in society. One might ask whether it depends in any measure upon the size or wealth or power of a nation, and what are the essential elements of nationhood. Doubtless these include race and language and some degree of continuity of political association; but in what proportion those elements must be present, or by what means they are so fused as to

create the living entity is not obvious. One might also ask whether national self-government necessarily includes political independence and the exercise of full sovereign rights. Has any group of persons, however small, a moral claim to separate political existence and independence? Has any people or nation, however weak, the moral right to separate itself from some larger group of which it has formed part, without regard to the good of the larger whole? And are there any moral or Christian grounds upon which a distinction can be drawn between the right to become an independent nation and the right to remain one?

"No Christian is likely to defend 'Empire' in the sense either of the domination of the weak by the strong or of the exploitation of the subject nation by the ruling nation. Whether or not either or both of these abuses have in the past existed within the colonial systems of various powers, they are not now defended. The case is made for empire, or for the control of one people by another, is that the subject people, by reason of cultural backwardness or internal division or external menace, is unable to defend itself or keep order or good government. The League Covenant referred to such peoples as 'a sacred trust of civilization,' and the conception of the mandate system was essentially a moral conception.

"Empire as such can be condemned only if the subject

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peoples receive no benefits from it or if it creates evils greater than the benefits which it does bestow. It has been said that self-government is more important than good government, and certainly self-government is a vitalising force, since it quickens political interest and trains men and women to undertake responsibility; but when political life becomes corrupt, the more immediate need may be good government. . . ."

Position of the Catholic Church in Poland

From Polish underground publications recently received in London, a detailed report has been compiled by K.A.P., Polish Catholic News Agency, on the situation of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland during the first five months in 1943.

In Western provinces of Poland, illegally incorporated in the Reich, and in Ciechanow province, a special Roman Catholic Church has been established for the German population under the protection of the Gestapo.

Many Catholics, classed as German by Germans, suffer religious persecution together with the Polish population, however. All priests are scrupulously supervised by the Gestapo, which moves them from one parish to another at will. The situation is the same in Pomorze where all churches have been formally declared to be German. In Silesia all Polish churches have been placed in the custody of the German Gestapo.

In the provinces of Pomorze local German authorities have denied burial in consecrated ground to those Poles who refused to list themselves as Germans. Marriages contracted by the Poles after the outbreak of the war, have been declared null and void, the children listed by the civil authorities as illegitimate under the maiden name of the mother.

SS Troops Attend Christian Church Services

According to recent information Heinrich Himmler, the head of the German SS troops who are the spear-head of pure paganism in the Nazi movement, ordered his troops to attend Christian church services during

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the holidays. The official organ of the SS troops, the *Schwarze Korps*, has since carried editorials in which the practice of the Christian faith has again been made officially respectable. Observers believe that this new tendency in the Nazi movement is an adjustment to a very strong Christian sentiment, both among the soldiers and civilians.

It represents in a sense the same kind of response to the persistent Christian faith of the populace as has been recently evident in Russia.

China Doubles Aid to Foreign Missions

The Chinese government will double its financial assistance to foreign missions cut off from their home bases by the war, the Chungking radio said recently in an English language broadcast to North America.

The broadcast reported by U. S. government monitors, said the missions include Swiss, Danish, Norwegian and other nationals.

The outbreak of the European war severed many missionaries from their source of home funds and their support was largely taken over by contributions from America, Great Britain and other Allied countries and administered by the National Christian Council of China.

From a Chaplain's Letter

One of our Protestant chaplains has written the denominational authorities as follows:

"... As I am now situated I have some six chaplains who hold administrative positions over me. Five of the six are Roman Catholic. And don't tell me that it just happened that way. The Protestant chaplains are beginning to feel that our church statesmen are exceedingly remiss in safeguarding our religious heritage; that we are being let down. Surely there is enough virility left in American Protestantism to keep its men in the service under Protestant leadership. What we have on the part of our leaders is ecclesiastical appeasement, failure to see events, failure to understand events, and the idea 'Everybody means well, etc.' Please tell our leaders to wake up. We finally woke up politically; now it is high time that we wake up theologically and ecclesiastically. To many it will be a rude awakening and they won't like this world of greed, pride, and struggle for power. Actually your problem is simple: get the facts, and give the facts the light of day. Sweetness won't solve the problem; light will. Should these fail, there is always the heat treatment."

In the next issue we will publish an important article on the colonial question from the Christian point of view by Miss Margaret Wrong, secretary of the Committee on Christian Literature for Africa for the International Missionary Council.

Authors in This Issue

Joseph L. Hromádka, formerly of Prague, and now Professor of Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, was the most influential Protestant theologian in Czechoslovakia.

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